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SECTION E

Washington Times

## In search of modern Merlins: Psychics gain wider credibility

By Tom Kelly  
THE WASHINGTON TIMES

**B**elief in psychic phenomena, on par with a belief in astrology a decade ago, is gaining new respectability.

The most striking change is in the scientific community. It is exhibiting a new willingness to believe that some people can know things by inexplicable means and that others can will the behavior of physical objects.

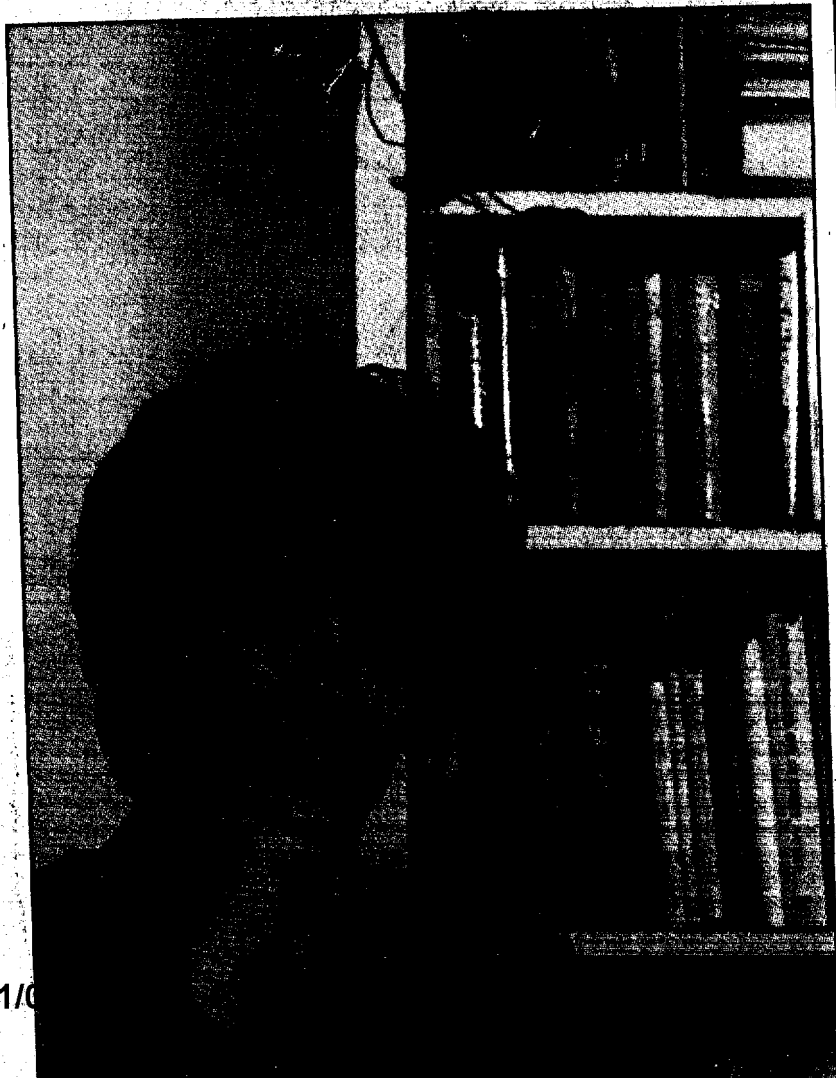
Psychologist Brenda Dunne, a member of a Princeton University scientific team which has conducted elaborate tests of psychic ability for 15 years, says the era of flat rejection is nearly over.

"A survey taken about three years ago among scientists showed that a clear majority, well over 50 percent, believe there is something there. This is in contrast to one taken about 12 years ago when most did not."

Marcello Truzzi of East Michigan University, who was chairman of the Committee for Scientific Investigation of Claims of the Paranormal, decided his associates were interested only in debunking phenomena. He founded the Center for Scientific Anomaly Research, which keeps a determinedly open mind.

"If this stuff has any truth, it has national security," he says.

The new acceptance and linkage of national security also is apparent



People don't object — it's Ms. Ball. "If Jim and I do things he says, people love us. But when he says it, it really broadens the show."

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—ss D. Franklin/The Washington Times studios.

Jim Wright, Texas Democrat, is another.

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staff "take a detached, scientific and very supportive interest" in the work being done by her and her colleagues.

Mr. Wright's office says he has attended lectures by Washington psychic Anne Gehman; Mrs. Gehman says she has discussed psychic phenomena with Mr. Wright and his wife, Betty, and has a friendly relationship with them.

Mr. Pell, perhaps Capitol Hill's most unabashed believer, has urged the National Science Foundation, the Defense Department and other government agencies to increase psychic research funding. He has a full-time staff member, C.B. Scott Jones, whose exclusive job is to monitor reports of psychic activities.

Rep. Charlie Rose, North Carolina Democrat, is the founder of the Congressional Clearing House on the Future, which has met with psychics. He has urged the CIA to initiate a "psychic Manhattan Project" to develop its abilities to monitor Soviet military projects.

The government's interest in psychic phenomena began in the '70s when the Pentagon and the CIA, with the backing of Congress, sponsored

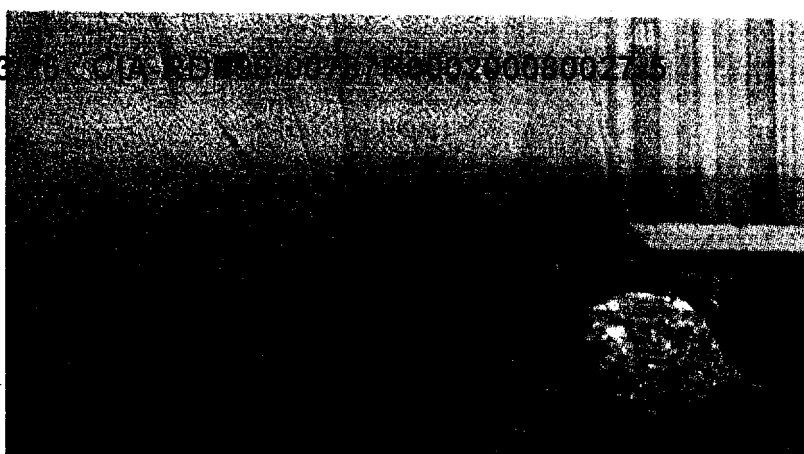


Photo by Stephen Crowley/The Washington Times  
Washington psychic Anne Gehman cautions that any medium who guarantees physical phenomena is a "liar, a cheat and a fraud."

experiments on remote viewing at SRI International, formerly Stanford Research Institute, at Menlo Park, Calif. It continues today.

In a report last year, the National Research Council said the Army and its advisers had considered if paranormal forces "might be used to jam enemy computers, prematurely trigger nuclear weapons and incapacitate weapons and vehicles." It said "one suggested application" was to form a battalion of "warrior

monks" who could exert long-distance influence over enemy personnel.

The cutting edge currently is focused on less spectacular goals, the abilities of people to foresee coming events — Precognitive Remote Perception — or to shape current ones — psychokinesis.

The most intriguing results have been those reported by scientists at

see PSYCHIC, page E2

ATER / Hap Erstein

## 'Face a Face' Puppets in Paris

When we tend to relegate puppetry to the realm of children's entertainment, the French understand it as a birthday party dippets can be the conduit of comedy and chilling drama. The faces of puppets, though immobile, do not convey the emotion.

Among the unspoken rules of which a Parisian puppeteer operates. With its how, "Face a Face," a long, moving and infectious series of skits, Heracio Peralta and his colleagues expand the possibilities of their art without overdoing it with spectacle or gimmick.

Appearance is the first French puppet theaters to French Embassy this



Puppeteers fade into the background once the performance starts.

year under the umbrella of the Marionette Performance Festival Francais. If the other two companies are as inventive and awe-inspiring, you should make a point of pulling strings to go see them all.

Although billed as appropriate for both adults and children, one fears that today's television-trained youngsters may not have the patience or attention span for a show that evolves in such delicate strokes and tiny touches. Instead,

"Face a Face" manages the more difficult achievement of transforming adults, at least those who are willing to accept the experience, into children.

The stage of the modern Maison Francaise auditorium is clad in black, as are the two puppeteers. At times they appear alongside the puppets they manipulate, occasionally interacting with them and often merely standing out of the light in a semblance of invisibility.

When they mask themselves completely in black, all it takes from a cooperative viewer is the slightest squint and the puppets are moving by themselves.

At one point, Miss Nicolas carefully takes a puppet of an old woman out of a wicker basket, lays it down on the table-performance platform and leaves the stage. With a wondrous touch of theatrical magic, the doll then snaps to life — by itself or at least at the hand of the unseen Mr. Peralta.

The puppets move by the simple, almost imperceptible actions of their masters, all the better to sustain the illusion of self-propelled creatures. Bululu strips puppetry down to its essence, a feat well illustrated by the opening scene of a

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**ane Haslem Salon (2025 Place NW)** in Dupont Circle was intended to be a joint venture to Mrs. Haslem's nighttime gallery on Seventh Street. But as lease problems grew, the space last December, the salon of regular monthly exhibitions has fallen to the salon. The salon will continue to function somewhat differently from a traditional salon. Her son and the salon's di-

through Feb. 11, might inspire women are depicted in art has become a subject of intense debate and analysis over the past decade, and women are Ms. Friedman's preferred subject matter.

If her small portrait renditions of heavy-lidded, porcelain-skinned beauties are innocuous enough, a number of full-figure and multiple-figure compositions display the tense conjunction of innocence and

by disjunction from the surrealistic figures of the women from Picasso's classical period, and such classical subject matter as Botticelli's "Three Graces."

Ms. Friedman's "Three Figures on the Beach" translates this Renaissance motif into a dream vision; the cavorting women seem oblivious to a severed foot on the sand before them. The intimation of menace and prior violence that

for atmosphere. As a result, we tend to read the paintings as patches of color on canvas even as we relate to their recognizable subject matter.

Achieving this kind of tension between the formal and the representational has long been a concern of painters. Mr. Koch, however, casts no new light on the matter, and here the picturesque remains just picturesque.

Hotel Terminus"

NR (descriptions of Holocaust victims, colleagues, employers, intimates, observers of Klaus

victims, colleagues, employers, intimates, observers of Klaus

**CTION:** Directed, researched produced by Marcel Ophuls, live-produced by John S. Han, Hamilton Fish and Peter edited by Albert Jurgenson Catherine Zins, associate producer Bernard Farrel, with Memory released by the Samuel Ryn Company

4½ hours plus a brief mission

**E:** Cineplex Odeon Circle Outer, 4849 Wisconsin Ave. NW

**I:** Opens Friday

**UM RATING:** FOUR STARS

## PSYCHIC

From page E1

SRI, Princeton and the Mind Science Foundation in San Antonio, Texas.

In the precognition tests one person, the "precipient," describes a randomly selected place that a colleague, "the agent," is about to visit.

Miss Dunne says in a test which she conducted when she was at Mundelein College in Chicago, the agent picked a sealed envelope from a stack of 10 containing sites chosen by outsiders.

The Rockefeller Chapel at the University of Chicago was the site picked and the precipient, some miles away, described the chapel in extraordinary detail: "I am getting the little turrets around the building ... long windows in a row quite high ... a heavy wooden door with a black bolt on it. ... My feeling at the moment is that it is a building like a church, and I can see the pews."

Miss Dunne said that about 15 percent of similar tests at Princeton produced results equally rich in accurate detail.

The main emphasis at Princeton, however, has been on psychokinesis, which can be more easily fitted into scientific controls. Robert G. Jahn, dean emeritus of the School of Engineering and Applied Science, Miss Dunne and others have reported the results of 78 million trials in which voluntary operators have tried to influence the behavior of natural background static, called "white noise," and the distribution of free-falling balls.

In the first experiment an electronic device produces 1,000 white noise pulses a second. Left to chance, half would have positive electrical charges, half negative.

The participating volunteers try to influence the impulses by concen-

trating on a desired outcome. The results over the years show a divergence from the norm 10,000 times greater than indicated by chance.

In the second major experiment, called the "Random Mechanical Cascade," a specially designed machine drops 9,000 polystyrene balls through a matrix of 330 pegs.

Left to chance, the balls would be distributed among 19 bins in a uniform, perfectly balanced fashion, with a few at each end and most in the middle in what is known as a bell curve.

Operators will the balls to one side or the other. And results over 15 years, according to Miss Dunne, have, again, been 10,000 times as great as anticipated.

The other major psychokinesis experimenter, Helmut Schmidt, a quantum physicist formerly of Duke University and currently of the Mind Science Foundation in San Antonio, has achieved even more striking results. His subjects try to influence the clicks of a Geiger counter.

The clicks, which measure the emissions of radioactive materials, come at predictable rates. Operators try to speed or slow them. Mr. Schmidt says they have outscored chance by 10 million to one.

The scientific interest in paranormal events has a historical foundation. Thomas Edison was a firm believer in the paranormal, and physicists Albert Einstein, Max Planck and Neils Bohr took open-minded attitudes.

In the 1920s, J.B. and Louisa Rhine were appointed to the faculty of the Department of Psychology at Duke University, where they touched off a new interest in psychic phenomena.

Reports by today's experimenters have received considerable attention, but less than total acceptance in the scientific community. John

Palmer, of the Foundation for Research of the Nature of Man, in Durham, N.C., says in "An Evaluative Report on the Current Status of Parapsychology" (1985) that the experiments do support the existence of anomalies.

A report by the National Research Council, "Enhancing Human Performance" (1988), which was funded by the Army, concluded that they "fall short of an experimental ideal" and do not "justify any conclusion." The report praised "the sincerity and dedication" of the investigators and recommended that the Army continue to monitor the work at Princeton, SRI and San Antonio.

Mr. Truzzi takes a more positive view. He says scientists prefer to describe test results as "anomalies," or abnormalities, and avoid such terms as paranormal phenomena.

He says he would prefer to have their significance explained in terms of physical laws. If they turn out to be paranormal phenomena, he says, "it would shake my world to its foundations."

Mrs. Gehman, a board member of the National Spiritualist Association of Churches, who charges a minimum "gift" of \$100 for a 60-minute session and who says she has married people from Capitol Hill among her clients, believes that she can communicate with "those who have gone through the process of death," and certain situations can heal and be healed.

But she says 99.9 percent of reported physical phenomena — tapping, levitation and such — are fraudulent and that any medium who guarantees physical phenomena is a "liar, a cheat and a fraud."

She says that if the scientists eventually prove that their anomalies are rooted in natural law won't bother her at all.

"Whatever the explanation," she says, "I will be content."